November 10, 1969

Dear Harold,

This is in response to your letter about Finck and his position at the autopsy, ect.

First of all, I think you may have missed the thrust of what I said about the Humes reference. Yes, the transcript can't tell us many essential things - such as if McCloy emphasized the word "exit" (I doubt if he did) or more important if Humes paused before answering the question. Nevertheless, it is on record that to the best of Humes' knowledge there were no traces of an exit wound. If what Finck said about no traces of anything in N.O. IS TRUE, then we have good reason to believe that Humes cut away the wound before Finck arrived. Understand that he could have done this very easily without any sinister intent - just like removing the brain but I'll go into that in a minute. If Humes did remove it then the chances are strong (still speculation) that he made slides of it. If he did this, you can be damned sure that he would have made known the results if they showed exit(especially since Perry told him what he accurately reflectd in his written draft - that it was an entrance wound). The record is vague on this point, I know. But the record is so vague when it comes to anything against the official story that I cannot believe it is all a coincidence. All considered, I refuse to believe that Humes did not see the front wound. He may have been incompetant but he wasn't blind and there's a limit to how much of an innocent, babbling baby you can make him before it becomes ridiculous. Like Dick says, if you want to attribute all of this merely to incompetance, then you have to assume that in some way the three stooges got surgeons outfits and were given access to the body. If that wound was visible to a camera, then it was visible to a curious eye, especially an eye that took a measurment to .5 cm there and looked at the musculature there. This bit about the tracheotomy obscuring the wound is one of the biggest obfuscations. I have every reason to believe that the docs were alerted to that wound and I am persuaded by Dick's thinking that the call to Perry was part of a cherade.

About Finck and the brain, let me explain some more. First let me retract what I said about <u>why</u> he was called in since any speculation is just that - I'd rather stay away from it. I do know this: Finck testified in NO that he arrived after the brain was removed- this I assumed from Humes' WC testimony. About the exact time he arrived, don't try to nail him on that because he can use the standard cop-out that his memory could be wrong or faded. Humes testified that he and Boswell peeled("reflected") the scalp to each ear(2H354). Here is where I think you are misinterpreting what you read. The meaning of "Humes had practically nothing to do" to remove the brain refers to work with a saw which normally would be necessary. Humes tesified to this(2H354) where he says"We has to do virtually no work with the saw to remove these portions of the skull, they came apart in out hands very easily..." This I would expect, in fact demand of extensively fragmented skull with the scalp reflected. On the same page he says that while they were looking at the brin in the head, many pieces of skull fell off onto the table. Now, no one can answer me why Humes was such a bumbling idiot as to remove the brain before the qualified man he summoned arrived. This is nonsense and it is of course possible that it is a reflection on his incompetance but I am in no way persuaded that we can eliminate anything else; Humes was no idiot. As far as actually removing the brain, I've ruined too many brains by trying to squeeze them out of holes which are smaller then their

largest componant. The hole in the head unless exactly the size of half of the cranium would not permit the contents to be removed. Don't be fooled by this. It required no work with a saw on Humes' part to enlarge the opening enough to remove the brain, but without such enlarging, the brain could not come out. Back to my original point: this enlarging of the hole plus the peeling back of the scalp would have completely destroyed the margins of the big hole. The best evidence in that wound were the two things that Finck never saw - the margins of it and the relationship of the damaged brain to it. I should also call to your attention the fact that slides were not taken from the periphery of that big hole(rather there is no record of them). If you put all this together, you come up with the simple fact that there was not enough evidence present to Finck for him to accurately judge the true character of the head wounds and what produced them. Make of this what you will. The official reason for calling Finck is because he was experienced in gunshot wounds and could assist the the other docs. If this is so, then I cannot in my wildest dreams imagine why Humes would be so absolutely stupid and mindless as to remove the brain - unless, of course, this was done before Finck was called. I think this is the most important aspect of Finck's position. I never much went for Wecht's feeling that here is an Army doctor at a Navy hospital under the supervision of Navy doctors. Finck seems honest at least in his role at the autopsy and from what I gather, he didn't give a hoot about who he was working under because in many cases, he seems to have repremanded Humes and Boswell and put them on the right track. For example, he made them take total body X-rays when he arrived/ he apparently corrected this nonsense of probing the wound with their fingers and used a metal probe.

I still am far from convinced of a forward jerk at Z291 because I was able to aternate between 290 and 291 on my projecter and saw no movement of JFK, onlyof the Z camera - this is what I note in regular viewing. I talked to one physicist who said definately that a bullet from the front could counter a bullet from the rear and continue to propell the head in its direction if it was of a higher velocity tan the first. I'd like to see what the engineers wrote you since they may have misunderstood the idea behind the double hit. I checked on the forward motion between 312 and 313 and still have no reason to doubt it. It is apparent on my copy, it is very obvious on the slides asreflected in my notes, and it is shown in Tink's measurements(which despite your distaste for the guy you have no basis to dispute). What you think you see on Dick's slide leaves open the way for misconstruing anything at all. I'll try to make overlays of my tracings to show you conclusively but until then, I urge you to accept the fact that JFK moves forward between 312 and 313.

On my head shot memo, the roadstripes represented the axis of the car and do not affect anything whether they were there or not- i.e. I could have drawn the axis in myself. The important thing about the memo is that the thrust through JFK's head from a shot from east end of TSBD would have been left to right. This does not account for all of the contre coup damage except for that to the first left temporal convulusion which is definately from a rear shot. I'm enclosing a similar memo on the Connally hit although I don't have ~~illustrations~~ of the accompanying maps. If you're interested enough to want to see or copy them, ask and I'll gladly send them.

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I know that my Dickey interview is a mess. It was the first time that I interviewd anyone and I was not adequately prepared or briefed. I doubt if I can get back to see him but I'm going to try for a

letter to get what you want.

I gat a reply from the Archives on the shirt slits. They told me that if I want them examined, I'd have to arrange for it with the FBI. This I'll try for I might be able to get them to say that there is nothing about the slits that can be associated with a bullet's or missile's passage. My previous analysis is wrong and I see my error. You may be interested in a memo I'm enclosing about the anterior neck wound because it relates. (All the stuff I'm enclosing you can keep because it's all extras). The Archives also told me that they won't make photos of the slits and that they have "file pictures" which they show and reproduce. I wrote them and asked them to reconsider since they let CBS film all of the clothing. I also wrote about getting the XXX 5X7 prints of the 399 base in my photo.

Won't Harper let Gary do what he wanted? That's a shame but I am satisfied about the position of the fragment because it is my recollection that he did use fixed reference points.

Anything else I had to say escapes me now. Sorry if I sound terribly assertive or unfriendly in this letter but I'm pressed for time and I had to get it off in a hurry.

Still,

Howard